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 REVIEW OF NEW PUBLICATIONS.

An Account of Ireland, Statistical, and Political; by Edward Wakefield. In two volumes, quarto. Price 6 Guineas. London, printed for Longman, and Co.

Μεγά Βιβλίον Μεγά Κακόν, an ancient and general maxim, which, like most others, has its exceptions; and we are willing to think, that the present performance is one of them. In truth, it is a book of most mighty mass, of weight and worth, that must be felt, we should hope, by most of readers in their minds, and by not a few—in their pockets. Had one of these volumes filled the capacious hands of the Herculean Dr. Johnson; at that time when “with ‘jaculation dire’ he invaded the head of poor Osborne the bookseller, a single stroke, of such a literary ‘cestus’” would doubtless have been sufficient to send the shopkeeper out of the world, and perhaps the author also, in the consequences of such conflict. It was observed of the French Encyclopedia, from all its minute and circumstantial details, not merely of the superior arts and sciences, but concerning the most common trades and handicraft operations, illustrated even to the lowest instrument with engraved representation, that the work seemed intended to provide for the recurrence of some great revolution of this globe, such as the East Indians suppose to happen in the periodical descent of the Avatars; and thus to preserve, if possible, an exact and particular record of all that was thought or done by the human creature; all that was done in the city, and the country; in the palace, and in the hovel; in the observatory, in the manufactory, in the homestead, and in the kitchen. In like manner, we should

think that Mr. Wakefield has had a melancholy anticipation of some coming deluge, and, with ant-like forecast, has resolved to lay up the whole and entire of the green Island in this ark of authorship, measured, by cubit, length, and breadth, and height, while in the general wreck, these floating volumes might ride “tilting o’er the waves,” uplifted and secure, enclosing their precious deposit, their menagerie and their museum, until a lucky chance should throw them in the way of some curious post-diluvian.

On the head of this capacious ark, or, in other words, upon the title-page of this book, ought to be printed the words “SPARSA COEGL.” It is indeed a collection, we can scarcely call it a condensation, but in general a discriminating and useful collection from various documents of ancient and later date, respecting Ireland, its climate, history, natural, civil, and political; its population, manners, agriculture, manufactures; its government, religions, state of parties civil and ecclesiastical; its abuses, its capabilities; in short, the whole of its economy, physical, statistical, and political, extracted, and, in a certain degree, condensed from innumerable pamphlets, speeches, reports, dissertations, the result of which, on the whole, we judge to have been a most meritorious labour, and highly creditable to the patience and the patriotism of the author. We must, however from motives of superior duty, observe, that in the mind of the author (and such is the inevitable consequence of such an aggregate in composition,) there is by no means a perfect assimilation of the materials, and hence not only the materials themselves are heterogeneous and inconsistent, but there is

generated a corresponding incongruity of sentiment in the writer, who seems *not yet* to have formed a stable and coherent political character, too often driven, as he seems to be, by encountering forces, into the passive *diagonal*.

We have made use of the terms "*not yet*," for we rejoice to observe, that Mr. Wakefield, (as is indeed the case with most of the late travellers into Ireland,) however he might, have been early beset by personal predilections, or national preferences, has obviously discarded them as he passed on, and in his progress, not only bids fair to do great service to the public, by the promulgation of liberal sentiments in political economy, but has done the same good offices to *himself*. We think there are many indications in the course of his work, that, even during the period past in writing it, he was made, or (a still higher praise,) became by *his own* efforts, a political convert from a very narrow and illiberal school of politics, particularly as applied to Ireland; and, upon this enfranchisement, proceeds on his journey with more vigour and alacrity.

Ireland has, in reality, been a practical school of improvement to political students, by a practical display of all the extensive and complicated effects of *bad* government. It has had the effect of those demonstrations called *ad absurdum*. It has given lessons in the *morbid* anatomy of the body politic, and, by this indirect mode, we are not only instructed in the deviations from the healthy state, but are enlightened with respect to the best means of correction or cure. And we are convinced, that few Englishmen, selfish, repulsive, and unaccommodating as their nation is said to be, have come over to this country, either as idle or inquisitive travellers, who have not returned home with their

hearts dilated by feelings the most honourable to human nature, and with their minds enlarged and enlightened on the best interests of the British Empire.

With respect to the highest set of visitants, it is asserted on unexceptionable authority, that three or four of our late chief governors (for of the endless succession of secretaries that are scarcely named to office until they depart and are forgotten, it is needless to speak,) have, during their residence in Ireland, discarded many of their English prepossessions, and become converts to Catholic emancipation, as well as other measures of public reform. This conversion is not, indeed, very apparent during their *residence*, where they quietly and unresistingly conform to the rule of strong government, and, with minor functionaries, pocket their salaries in silent satisfaction; but when they return to their seats in Parliament, they do not scruple to manifest their sentiments on the settled system of misgovernment, and the proper measures of reformation. And we have little doubts that our present gracious viceroy, when he gives up the multiplied cares of government, and his head has got a proper time to cool, and his heart to warm, after recrossing the channel, he will rise in his place to congratulate the Empire on the wise, and necessary incorporation of the Catholics of Ireland, in the community of privilege; and the fraternity of affection.

It is therefore the less to be wondered at, that Englishmen, unconnected with office, and unrestrained by sinister obligation, (and such we conceive Mr. Wakefield to be,) should give the public both a luminous and liberal view of Ireland; more so indeed than may be expected from inhabitants of the country, who seldom attain to such a comprehensive knowledge of their native

island, as the well informed traveller; and who, in this respect, resemble the shop keeper that lived for half a century within a stone's-throw of St. Pauls, yet never during that time had the curiosity of entering into the inside of the cathedral. It is indeed to ARTHUR YOUNG, an Englishman, more powerful as an author, more ardent and energetic, and truly patriotic when visiting *other* countries, than in *his own*, where he has sunk into an anomalous, and ambiguous character, and even in his favourite vocation, rather a writing and speculative, than a practical and profitable farmer; it is, however, to the excellent work of this Englishman upon Ireland, that Irishmen themselves are indebted for a knowledge of their country, its advantages, its capabilities, its resources, all kept dormant, from various causes, on which he expatiates with an animated popularity of style, and a great vigour of just political sentiment. The statistical views of the different counties in Ireland, some of them good, some bad, and the most of them of unambitious mediocrity, have, however, contributed not only to enlarge, but to diffuse the knowledge of this secreted island; and have laid in the materials, which, in a second process of the literary manufacture, become so necessary in the fabrication and consolidation of such ponderous volumes as Mr. Wakefield has presented to the public, an Englishman describing Ireland to the Irish people.

And, we must repeat, with evident and peculiar advantage to both parties. We are disposed to think, that, however our countrymen may pique themselves on their personal spirit, there is a certain *literary* intrepidity, a fearlessness of observation on numerous abuses, breaches of public trust, misapplication of endowments; perversion of charitable institutions, prostitutions of office, and,

perhaps more than all, on particular instances of oppression and cruelty in a heavy-handed and hard hearted aristocracy, which an *Irishman*, from a false shame, a false delicacy, and perhaps from a little fear, connected as he is, or as he *may be*, would hesitate to publish upon, or against his country and his countrymen. An Englishman, liberal like Mr. Wakefield, and "in seipso totus teres atque rotundus," can, under such circumstances, nobly exercise the *ensorship* of the press, and vindicate the honourable impartiality, as well as intrepid integrity which becomes an author: the man who professes to instruct, or to inform mankind.

The following account is given of the origin of this work. "In the course of the discussion before the Committee of the House of Commons, in 1808, on the best mode of affording relief to the West Indian planters, they and the merchants produced such statistical information, as afforded apparently powerful arguments in favour of their interests. This information was obtained from Sir William Young's West Indian Common Place Book; and it then occurred to me, that a similar work on Ireland might be highly acceptable to those interested in the prosperity and welfare of that country; especially as information respecting her resources and powers of improvement, moral as well as physical, could be gathered only from detached accounts, scattered throughout numerous volumes, which are seldom to be met with in England: even the representatives of that country in the British Parliament, seemed either unacquainted with her true interests, as far as related to this great question, or unable, from want of sufficient information, to state and enforce it, so as to produce a beneficial effect. The necessity of such a work was sug-

gested in a conversation with Mr. Foster; and I considered his opinion as no mean sanction for concluding, that a compilation of this kind would be of great use, not only to Ireland, but to the empire at large. Mr. Foster was so obliging, as to offer me all the assistance and information in his power; but I consider it necessary to observe, that although the idea of the work originated in this manner, the opinions are my own; they are the unbiassed result of a patient investigation of the state of the country, from actual observation. I stated to Mr. Foster, that if I undertook the work, it must be done unconnected with any party, and that I should consult the Duke of Bedford and the Earl of Darnley, noblemen who did not accord with him in political opinion. Mr. Foster approved my intention; and both these noblemen were assiduous in introducing me to such of their friends as were likely to aid in the undertaking. To these noblemen, and to the Earl of Fingall, I am particularly indebted; they afforded me the means of procuring much valuable information; and I take the liberty here of mentioning their names, to show, that it was my early determination, not to collect materials merely from those who seemed desirous only in one way of serving Ireland."

It is no small praise to our author, that coming to Ireland under the auspices of John Foster, he soon emancipated himself from the trammels, and dared to exercise a discriminating independent mind. He boldly opposes some of the favourite opinions of the Irish Ex-Chancellor: he obliquely condemns his system of the corn laws, reprobates bounties and the job of bog-commissioners, and exposes the futility of the linen-board. His sentiments on the latter subject being so congenial with those

frequently expressed in our Commercial Reports, we shall give an extract.

"The appointment of seal-masters, to prevent frauds, and the establishment of regulations, by which bleachers are obliged to make up their goods in a just and fair manner, under the forfeiture of the bonds into which they enter when their names are registered, is extremely proper; but all this might be done at a twentieth part of the expence now incurred. London, which receives so large a portion of linens made in Ireland, has no public hall for their sale. The sellers provide warehouses, and however unpopular the measure, the linen hall might be sold, and all the officers attached to the establishment might be dismissed, without the least injury to the trade, or to the interests of the country."

A trade so long followed as the linen-trade, if it is not already sufficiently established to stand alone, deserves to fall. But England treated Ireland as the Knights of chivalry treated the female sex, who robbed them of their real rights, and their proper distinguishing characters, and gave in return, a spurious homage, and a delusive degrading attention. So England robbed Ireland of her woollen-trade, shackled her commerce, and branded with opprobrious marks the majority of the population, while the partisans of English interest, both in and out of the Irish Parliament, affected to dole out encouragement to the linen trade. Wakefield compares the cotton to the linen-trade, and appears to give the preference to the former. On this subject we have not time, nor room, to enter at present, but we cordially acquiesce in the following observation, while we attribute the supposed want of energy to the political circumstances of the country.

"On considering the manner in which the linen trade is conducted, it would ap-

pear that there is something very singular in the Irish character; and one is almost inclined to believe, that it is deficient in energy, a feature so conspicuous in that of many other nations. The people of Ireland seem incapable of calling forth their own powers of exertion, unless when stimulated by adventitious assistance. A spinner to become industrious, must be presented with a wheel; a weaver, before he will work, must be supplied with a loom; and a bleacher cannot carry on business unless he be furnished with a house in Dublin, for the purpose of selling his commodity."

On the subject of draining bogs, the present grand Irish job in prospect, the author decidedly expresses his opinion in opposition, and hints that millions of public money may be expended, and the work left unaccomplished. He proposes the following simple plan, to prevent interested opposition to public utility, and besides communicates other useful practical hints on the subject of draining, for which we must refer to the book.

"It will, perhaps, be asked, whether I disapprove of the appointment of commissioners in Ireland, and of what they have done? I am ready to admit that their labours in some degree have been useful; the public are in possession of reports on the principal bogs, accompanied with sections of their strata; but all these might have been obtained at much less expence. This expence hitherto has been unimportant; it is, I believe, under £20,000; but the question is, what farther steps are to be pursued? and till something better is offered, I will venture to recommend one. Let an act be made for Ireland similar to the act of sewers in England, by which a local body of commissioners, without pay, are formed for each district, upon the application of two-thirds of the owners of the estates. These commissioners appoint a jury of twenty-three persons, also without pay, who, on viewing and examining the land, present the necessity of main drains, the cost of which is levied by an acreable cess on the district. Romney Marsh, in Kent, the marshes in Cambridgeshire and Lincolnshire, are all under the jurisdiction of such

commissioners, and in this manner the ignorance and obstinacy of no individual is suffered to injure the neighbourhood, by counteracting plans formed for the public good; and the land thus benefited by drainage pays for the expence of the improvement. In England there are abundance of persons so unenlightened as to throw every impediment in the way of projects highly advantageous to the community; this act rouses them from their indolence, overcomes their stupidity, and compels them to engage in works which they have neither judgment nor inclination to undertake of themselves."

On mountain improvement he dilates at large, and endeavours to separate theory from practice, showing the illusions of fanciful or fashionable notions, and the wide difference by which they are separated from sober judicious experience. The following observations present a no very pleasing picture, although probably it is a true one.

"But least I should have said in this account too much in favour of mountain population, I request the reader to attend to the following, which I copy from Dr. M'Parlan's Survey of Leitrim, and of the truth of which I entertain no doubt: 'drive swarms of unfortunate beings to barren skirts, and into the black bogs and mountains, where eventually they must reclaim them or die—it does, no doubt;—but under what circumstances? In these bogs they reluctantly throw up a kraal-like hovel, and spiritless and comfortless, unexperienced and untaught, they dig, and work out a half-starved existence, while the wet and filth of the half-open, half-thatched hovel, produce colds, rheumatisms, fevers, &c. Two-thirds of the family obtain the wished-for grave, and the remaining third, squalid, emaciated, and disabled by consumptions and rheumatisms, wander out the remainder of existence in beggary and pain. I speak from facts to which I have been too often a witness.' This is the account given by an Irishman; and can any increase of rent obtained by a landlord be set against such an accumulation of human misery? Irish landlords, read it; and consider it well, before you call colonies of mountain beggars, mountain

improvement. No: if mountains can be improved, if rent is to be increased, without contemning the happiness of our species: to effect the one without the other, is ungenerous; but to accomplish both at the same time, you must know something of the means, and of those enlightened principles which create them."

The system of forcing labourers to work for their landlords, at low wages, so as to balance the *conveniences* they receive from them, meets with the pointed censure of the writer.

"When in Ireland, I had a good deal of conversation on agricultural subjects with the irrigator from Gloucestershire, whom I met with at the seat of Mr. Trench, at Monivae, in the County of Galway, on the 2nd of November, 1809. He had worked in Tipperary, and in Clare; having been two years in the habit of hiring labourers, his opinion, of course, on this point, is of more importance. He complained of not being able to procure men to go on with his works; and I shall never forget the account which he gave me on this occasion. It is impossible to repeat it without feeling emotions of pity and indignation: 'These poor people,' said he, 'are glad to get a holiday, in order that they may enjoy a little relaxation from their toil, at a pattern or a fair.' On inquiring the reason, his answer was: 'Because they are paid only six-pence per day for their labour, and seldom obtain a settlement in less than six months. By the terms of their lease, they are obliged to work as many days as will pay their rent; and, when they have accomplished this, it is difficult to get them at all, for, if they worked at home, their landlords would see them, and order them to their domains; so that they must remain idle, or work for their landlords, for the paltry sum of six-pence a day.' And is this generally the case? 'Throughout all the West of Ireland, you may rely upon it, Sir.' And for what term are they thus bound? 'For their lives, in order to make free-holders of them.' Such being the prevailing system in many parts of Ireland, how is it possible that any proper return of the price of labour can be obtained."

The author, with a laudable impartiality, and a highly commend-

able fearlessness of giving offence, exposes some of the causes which injure Ireland, and which appear to give a sanction to the ill founded opinion of the idleness supposed to prevail among the lower classes, in the Southern and middle districts of our country. Labour, by various counteracting causes, is not suffered to find its own level, nor are they who are engaged in it, permitted to taste the sweets arising from it, in a manner so as to excite their industry. If the Irish labourer works less than the English, he is worse fed, has fewer advantages, and wants that stimulus which excites to exertion, and sweetens toil.

"It will, no doubt, be thought, that I have dwelt upon this subject with a tedious minuteness, which may counteract the intention I intended, by creating disgust; but I am so much convinced of its great importance, that I should not have been satisfied with myself had I passed it over in a slight manner, and without entering fully into the nature of the evils occasioned by the habit to which I allude. I must even remark farther, that the state of the prevailing religion in Ireland, and the manner in which the affairs of the Catholic church are conducted, have a very powerful tendency to diffuse a spirit of idleness among the people, as the priests depend for an income on the gratuitous donations of his parishioners; and as he has the power of commanding as many holidays as he chooses, this prerogative gives rise to an evil which deserves the most serious consideration, and which I shall notice at more length hereafter. It will suffice for the present to observe, that no money received for work done on a holiday, can be appropriated to the maintenance of a labourer's family; the sole disposal of it belongs to the priest, who frequently on such occasions grants 'permission' to his parishioners to work; this is certainly, an abuse which calls loudly for the interference of the dignitaries of the Catholic hierarchy, who ought to excite by every possible means, rather than damp the industry of the people.

"Even in Ulster, which abounds so much with Presbyterians, to whom the above remarks are not generally applicable, the

idleness created by the 'Yeomanry Corps' is greater than can well be conceived, but by those who have actually seen it. The Lieutenant is sometimes a tenant of the Captain, and frequently keeps 'a whiskey shop,' where the men receive their pay, and unless they spend on that intoxicating liquor a considerable part of what is due to them, they are not considered as 'good fellows.' A whisper is then spread about that the Captain expects they will 'give him a day,' to assist him in planting or digging up his potatoes. Such a system of causing people to work without payment, is certainly not to be found, if we except Russia, in any of the civilized countries on the face of the earth.

"Since I do not write for the purpose of gratifying any religious sect, or political party, and as I have no desire either to court popularity, or to seek for favour, I attach the same blame to the Catholic Bishop, who permits such causes of idleness to exist in his diocese, as I have done to the landlord, who contributes to produce a similar effect by the covenant he enters into with his tenants.

"I am fully convinced that the happiness of the people of Ireland depends much more than is generally supposed, on the Catholic clergy being drawn from their obscurity, if I may use the expression, and permitted to act a more enlarged part on the theatre of social life. I am no advocate for the interference of the priesthood of any church in the legislation or government of a country; a certain line is chalked out for them, and by confining themselves to the duties prescribed by their profession, they might be of essential benefit to the state. But while sectaries are degraded, while their ministers are deprived of that consideration which is necessary to inspire respect, and create esteem, they can have little encouragement to exert themselves for the general good, and they will remain without that influence which, while it commands attention to advice, always gives an additional, and more energetic force to example. Ireland is peculiarly circumstanced: its situation, notwithstanding what has been done, is still critical; every power which it possesses should now be brought into action: for it is certain, that it will need the united efforts of all men of education, whatever be their creed, to bring it to that state of internal stability which is requisite, before those improvements necessary to ensure public prosperity and

individual happiness can be introduced in such a manner as to render them effectual and permanent."

For the present, we must conclude our extracts, but in a future number we design to resume our tasks of farther observations, and making additional extracts. It may now be permitted to remark, that this work contains much valuable statistical information, amply sufficient to repay the toil of going through two ponderous volumes. If in the commencement of the chapters we meet with much extraneous matter, and some things which look like the spirit of book-making, as tedious and irrelevant dissertations on the Pontine marshes, by way of introduction to the chapter on Irish bogs; and an epitome of the natural history of turf and coals in the various parts of the world, as the introduction to other chapters, still much information may be gleaned from these volumes. The author throughout discovers an amiable and enlightened mind. He may occasionally be in error, but the merit of good intentions is always certainly his due. His censure in some places freely expressed, we are willing to receive, as the kind hints of a friend. Neither an individual, nor a nation, will improve, if resistance is always opposed to salutary hints of correction. By such unwise conduct, national vanity may be gratified, but national improvement will be retarded. The language of unvaried panegyric can seldom be true. An author should be thanked by a nation for his honest reprobation of their defects.

He exposes the error of a fondness for imitating England, when the circumstances of the two countries are essentially different especially in the formation of canals, which he judiciously observes, should follow trade, and not precede it. The defects not only in the plan, but in

the manner of conducting the Grand and Royal canals, are pointed out.

On the subject of distillation, many judicious remarks occur. The writer is a decided enemy to the use and preparation of this liquid poison. He demonstrates, that the use of grain in distilleries is not even useful, as some have asserted, in encouraging a market for grain. The state loses more in the deterioration of morals, and in the loss of industry, than is gained in revenue: and grain, with sufficient encouragement, would be grown without having a market to take off the redundancy in seasons of plenty, for though a facility of sale may be thus opened, much real injury is done to the country. In the chapter on distilling, the evil effects arising from it, both in a statistical and moral point of view, whether regard is had

to the legal or illegal distilleries, are clearly pointed out. He remarks, "the slave trade was carried on for ages without a blush, and the evil arising from distilleries, seems to excite as little regret, as did the sorrows of the poor Africans for a long series of years." The dismal effects of intoxication, partly arising from illegal distillation, and partly from the impolitic measure resorted to, in 1809, of lowering the duty on whiskey, are feelingly brought into view.

A mistake occurs at page 124 of the first volume. Limestone is said not to be found in Antrim, a blunder which the general face of that country abundantly contradicts. Toome, in said county, is twice written Tuam.

(To be continued.)

LIST OF NEW PUBLICATIONS.

BIOGRAPHY.

MEMOIRS of John Horne Tooke, Esq.; by Alexander Stephens, Esq.

Biographical and Critical Dictionary of Painters and Engravers; by Michael Bryan. Part. I. 15s.

DRAMA.

Retribution, a dramatic romance; by the author of "Sketches of History, Politics, and Manners, taken in Dublin and the North of Ireland, in the autumn of 1810;" 2s. 6d.

EDUCATION.

Outlines of an economical plan for conducting the Education of the Poor, on rational and economical principles; by Robert Goodacre, 1s.

Original Hymns for Sunday Schools; 5s. 6d. per dozen.

The Parent's Offering; or tales for children; by Caroline Barnard, 3s.

JURISPRUDENCE.

A Treatise on Summary Proceedings under the laws of custom and excise; by D. Howard, 10s.

BELFAST MAG. NO. LVII.

Reports of cases argued and determined in the high court of Admiralty, hiliary term, 1811; by John Dodson, LL.D.

MISCELLANIES.

Oriental Memoirs; selected from a series of familiar letters, written during seventeen years' residence in India; by James Forbes, F.R.S., &c.; 4 vols. royal 4to. £16 16s. bds.

A View of Society and Manners in the North of Ireland, in the summer and autumn of 1812; by J. Gamble, Esq., author of "Sketches of History, Politics, and Manners, taken in Dublin, and the North of Ireland, in the Autumn of 1810;" 11s. 4½d. bds.

A Refutation of the falsehoods and calumnies of a recent anonymous pamphlet, entitled, "A Portraiture of Hypocrisy;" supported by original letters, and authentic documents; by the Rev. J. Nightingale, 1s.

The Anglo-American, or Memoirs of Captain Henry Gardiner, 6s.

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